



State of New Jersey  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER  
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Berry's Creek Technical Advisory Group Meeting  
Minutes  
February 18, 1987

The seventeenth meeting of TAG took place at the new DEP Building in Trenton. The following people were in attendance: George Harvell, Bill Weddendorf, Dick Lee, Mark Kraus, Joe Maher, Bob Will, Oksana Yaremko, Richard Dime, Glenn Bukowski, Larry Schmidt. Also in attendance were Bob Gambrell (LSU), Robin Burr (USF&WS), Kathy Striker (EPA Region II) and Tom McNeven (DEP). The first item considered by TAG was approval of the minutes of the September 11, 1986 meeting. The minutes were approved as drafted with two minor corrections.

→ Dr. Dick Lee of WES provided the TAG with a status report of the WES research project. He noted that on January 8, WES transmitted its first progress report to Joe Maher, Project Manager. Attached to that progress report was enclosures, some of which were subsequently revised and updated. The latest revisions were distributed by Dr. Lee to the TAG representatives present at the meeting. The handouts included Schedule A, Schedule B, and Activity Schedule.

Dr. Lee further indicated that five progress reports will be submitted to TAG during the course of the research and he requested two weeks for review and comment by TAG members and response back to WES. Formal action on the progress reports will be at the TAG meeting following the dates of the progress reports. The revised schedule for the remaining progress reports will be June 24, 1987, September 18, 1987, and January 19, 1987.

Dr. Lee went on to describe the toxicity testing using daphnia to determine the suitability of the sediments for the research. He referred to and then distributed copies of reports dated November 18, 1986 and January 12, 1987, regarding the first two rounds of toxicity testing. Dr. Lee noted that based on the preliminary results of the testing salinity can be an important factor in toxicity to the daphnia. The contaminants in the sediments appear to be less available at higher salinity levels. Bill Weedendorf expressed concern that the testing should be standardized (exposure time) so as not to bias the results. Dick



responded by saying that the criteria for exposure is 48 hours as a standard to show greater than 60% survival. If the test was extended to 72 hours and then 120 hours it would still show toxic effects and thus demonstrate that the sediments to be used for the experiment are still toxic. Richard Dime indicated that the approach is sound and the criteria acceptable. Finally, Dick said that one more round of toxicity tests would be performed at the end of February. Then, a decision would be made to either use the sediments for the LSU experiment or obtain new sediments. Members of TAG agreed to go along with WES's decision on the third round of toxicity testing.

Further discussion took place on the toxicity testing. Bill Weedendorf suggested that salinity be adjusted to two parts per 1,000. Glen Bukowski suggested that only daphnia that were 48 hours old be used in order to standardize the results. Members of TAG urged that Hank Garie and/or the Office of Science and Research should formally put in writing its comments on the adequacy of the toxicity testing procedure used by WES.

Finally, TAG members agreed on a contingency plan in the event that testing showed less toxicity. The test case would be less toxicity in BC-3(300 parts per million mercury). It was agreed that new samples would be taken by HMDC under WES supervision in the field. The initial samples would be tested in HMDC labs to verify mercury levels. WES would blend and prepare sediments and do one more round of toxicity testing. Industries would have to pay the additional costs.

Bob Gambrell then gave a report on the progress LSU has made as a subcontractor to WES. He indicated that he has received funding, hired two new people, ordered equipment and set up most of the apparatus. Dr. Gambrell handed out a report on the sediment characterization to the TAG members present. He indicated that the incubations were ready to start on March 1, 1987.

During the morning coffee break, Larry Schmidt spoke to Hank Garie in the hallway regarding his future participation in TAG. Hank Garie indicated that a reorganization in the Office of Science and Research will not allow him to continue with TAG. He suggested that Glen Bukowski and/or Ron Harkov replace him on TAG. The issue of management of the WES contract by the Office of Science and Research was left up in the air.

After the break, TAG members discussed the list of "things to do" from the Minutes of the previous TAG meeting. The following is a summary of the outstanding items:

1. QA/QC -- Glen Bukowski reported that he has spoken to DEP's QA/QC office and that better communications are needed to understand what items need to be submitted and how those items will be reviewed. One item that came up was the need for a QA/QC plan from LSU and a sign off on the Plan which has been submitted by WES.

2. Analysis of metals in contract -- Dr. Lee and Dr. Grambrell stated that chromium, zinc, arsenic, nickel, and lead will be analyzed within the current structure of the budget. Dr. Lee also noted that WES will look at the isomers of PCB's at no extra cost.

3. Contract schedule -- As noted earlier Dr. Lee has provided TAG with a revised schedule and further indicated that final revisions will be made in the progress report scheduled to be issued on April 1.

4. "Red flag criteria on toxicity testing" -- Dr. Lee said the use of the sediments will be questioned only if they become less toxic. The TAG members agreed that less toxicity would be a red flag criteria.

5. HMDC's biota monitoring program -- There was an open item that Paul Galluzzi was to submit a write-up to TAG on the results of the 1985 Biota Monitoring Program. Mark Kraus did not know whether or not Paul finished the write-up before he left. However, Mark would send the data results to Larry Schmidt with or without the promised write up. Larry Schmidt would in turn send copies of the results to Glen Bukowski, Richard Dime and Robin Burr (acting as a subcommittee) to recommend to SAC on the need to continue routine biota monitoring in 1987.

6. Routine sampling for mercury in water -- Mark Kraus will submit a proposal for HMDC to continue routine water sampling in 1987. Glen Bukowski will check to see if HMDC has received its lab certification to do mercury analysis. This will be a prerequisite for continued participation. Bill Weddendorf and George Harvell did not object to the concept of the industries continuing to pay the cost of routine water monitoring (up to \$11,000 for 1987). Bill suggested that HMDC continue the routine monitoring provided that the lab certification issue is resolved within 2-3 months. He specified that the proposal be drafted so that only 15% of the mercury analysis would be duplicated, as opposed to 100% in 1986. It was suggested that HMDC continue the water sampling in the February/March period at its own risk and be reimbursed by the industries if the contract is approved.

7. C & F Realty -- Larry Schmidt asked the status of the Corps permit application following TAG sign-off on the mitigation plan. Oksana indicated that the permit is on

hold pending new sampling by C & F Realty based on a request by EPA. She distributed a letter from EPA to the Corps. It appears that EPA may recommend additional acreage for the mitigation and question potential bio-uptake.

The next agenda item was an explanation by Dick Lee on the COEMIS computer system for fiscal management among the industries, WES and LSU.

After a lunch break Joe Maher gave a report on the status of the RFP. One issue that has come up in the last few months is the physical logistics of sampling in Berrys Creek. Joe and Bill reported that some experiments took place on site during the fall of 1986. ONTECH Drilling and Morton Thiokol did the demonstration project and as a result made a recommendation that cores be obtained using a water based piece of equipment. Bill submitted a report to TAG members on the proposed sampling section of the RFP. The report needs to be reviewed by TAG members and further discussed at the next TAG meeting.

Joe Maher indicated that he would have the next draft of the RFP available to TAG members by the end of February and requested a two week review turn around. However, Joe said they first needed the following pieces of information to complete the RFP: 1. Methyl mercury analysis methodology. (Bob Gambrell will send his recommendations on this matter.) 2. Utilization of the GIS. (Glen Bukowski will get specifications from GIS staff on the recommended data format.) 3. Conflicts of Interest (Section 4.19). (This information should be provided by Velsicol and Morton Thiokol.)

Joe indicated that the DEP X-3-12 term contract is now in transition. He expected that a new contract will be ready in about six weeks.

At the request of Larry Schmidt, Dennis Stainken and Henry Hoffman from the DEP's QA/QC office joined the meeting. Dennis Stainken described the level of information that he felt was necessary in order to sign-off on the QA/QC program. He explained that he needed a program plan and an analytical component. Glen Bukowski stated that he had already sent the analytical component to Dr. Stankin's office and that the analytical methods were found to be acceptable. The office is close to making a final determination on organics and metals. In order to satisfy the need for the program plan component, Joe Maher agreed to send the scope of work and the WES proposal to Dennis for his review. Dr. Lee and Bob Gambrell agreed to submit a supplemental package on procedures. Glen Bukowski and Henry Hoffman will complete their review within two weeks of receipt of all the material.

The final agenda item was a discussion lead by Joe Maher on the tidal flooding that occurred in the Wood Ridge area on January 1, of 1987. Local officials lead by Mr. Harry Baker, Emergency Management Coordinator for Wood Ridge, expressed concern to the DEP that contaminated sediments may have been deposited in areas of Wood Ridge during the flood event. Joe Maher indicated that he and several people from DEP made a site visit on January 9 and took 4 sediment samples in areas around the West River Ditch tide gate that had been exposed to flooding. The samples are being analyzed by U.S. Testing with results due back on February 19, 1987.

One of the main concerns of the Wood Ridge officials was the fact that the tide gate on West Riser Ditch was malfunctioning and the Bergen County Public Works Department had responsibility for proper maintenance. Joe Maher had expressed concern that "mucking around" in the tide gate could pose a health hazard to workers. Bill Weedendorf and Mark Kraus stated that workers probably would not be affected if they took some basic precautions such as wearing gloves and boots and washing their hands thoroughly after being exposed to the sediments. They indicated that the malfunctioning tide gate could be the result of debris and/or sediment build-up around the gates. Minor relocation of sediments in the waterway may be all that is necessary for restoring the tide gate into working order.

The next meeting of TAG will be called by the Secretary when such a meeting is determined appropriate.